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"PREPAREDNESS"

By HENRY W. LAWRENCE, Jr.

THE EXAMINING surgeon said he didn't have a single white corpuscle left in his body. He was absolutely defenseless against the first disease that blew his way; so they sent him to the hospital."

"What kind of shape were you in?" I asked.

"They said I'd lost only about a third of my white army of defense and could safely do a moderate amount of work that was free from nerve strain."

With rare stupidity I inquired what there was about work in a military poison-gas laboratory to wear out a man's nerves. He showed very little surprise at my question, however. In the few weeks since he had been mustered out he had learned how densely ignorant the general public is regarding this major industry of future wars.

"I never worked in a T. N. T. factory," he said slowly, "but I'd a thousand times rather handle high explosives than these fumes from hell. Why, Doc, if I should tell you some of the things that new gas will do, some of the things I've seen it do, you'd swear it had affected my brain instead of my blood. While we were working in that laboratory, there wasn't a minute in the day when Death didn't peep out at us from every piece of apparatus we touched—not the good, old-fashioned kind of death that comes when a bayonet has gone through you or a bomb scattered you around, but a new and more fiendish kind, a super-kultur-efficiency sort of death, the supreme product of inhuman reason, and so unnecessarily thorough that you wondered how it happened to leave anybody alive."

"The Huns ought never to have begun that gas business," he continued, with rising patriotic pride. "They might have known that the Yanks could beat them at that kind of a game. Creative ingenuity is our long suit, and if they make us turn it toward war, so much the worse for them; and for war, too," he added suddenly. "My God, Doc, when I think what the next great war is going to be, even if our gas is the only new man-exterminator in it, I'm dead certain it will be the last, all right. There are some things that flesh and blood can't stand, if there happens to be any flesh and blood left after the first few months. We think we're so almighty smart, but we don't know that the Huns haven't got something worse up their sleeve. No, that can't be! Say, a man could soon go crazy thinking about that, if he'd ever worked at X—."

Then he looked at me in an embarrassed sort of way and added hastily, "Forget all I've said, won't you? My nerves aren't quite on the level yet, and I've no business to tell you anything about this stuff. Nobody has. Uncle Sam may need it some day, and he certainly don't want the enemy to get hold of it."

And not one word more would he say about it. He wouldn't even tell me the name of the place where the "stuff" was made; he just called it X—and said that some day, when the proper time came, the whole experiment would be written up by the half dozen men who alone knew all about it.

The "proper time" means, I suppose, that elusive hour when all danger of war has been removed from the

world. Meanwhile the United States Government must guard its priceless secret—a gas seventy-two times more potent than the terrible "M. O."; a fuming liquid that eats men alive and triumphs over any mask or armor; a concoction to make Satan envious—to burn, to poison, to asphyxiate. Verily, the Kaiser quit in the nick of time, unless, perchance, he, too, was preparing some new triple extract of physical damnation.

COST OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

By P. P. CLAXTON

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(This statement of the situation facing national educational interests and the relative expenditure of the people for the essentials and the luxuries of life is printed because of the intimate relation that exists between adequate education of the people and right action of the nation in shaping and supporting international policy.—EDITORS.)

DESPITE the low salaries of teachers and the meager and inadequate equipment of schools, many people believe the support of the public schools, elementary, secondary, and higher, to be our chief burden. This opinion seems to be very common about State legislatures and other tax-levying bodies. People otherwise well informed sometimes fall into this error. Recently a prominent professor in one of our great universities expressed the opinion that the support of the State universities was about to bankrupt some of the States. What are the facts? How do expenditures for the schools compare with other expenditures, public and private? The truth is public education is not a burden. Its cost is almost negligible when compared with other expenditures.

In 1918, the last year for which complete reports have been compiled, we spent in the United States for public education, elementary and secondary, \$762,259,154; for normal schools for the training of teachers, \$20,414,689; for higher education in colleges, universities, and professional and technical schools, whether supported by public taxation or privately endowed, \$137,055,415. The grand total was \$919,729,258. In the 50 years from 1870 to 1920, we paid for public elementary and high schools, \$12,457,484,563; for normal schools, \$291,111,232; for higher education in tax-supported and privately endowed colleges, universities, and technical schools, \$1,804,200,272—a total of \$14,552,796,037 for the 50 years.

For the years preceding 1870, two billions of dollars for public elementary and secondary schools, three millions for normal schools, and 150 millions for higher education would be very liberal estimates. Adding these to the totals given above will make a grand total of about \$14,500,000,000 for public elementary and secondary schools; \$295,000,000 for normal schools, and \$1,950,000,000 for higher education; approximately \$16,645,000,000 for public schools, elementary, secondary, normal schools, and higher education in schools of all kinds from the beginning of our history until 1920.